United Nations A/C.3/53/SR.10

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 December 1998
English
Original: French

Third Committee

Summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 October 1998, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Carrenza (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Guatemala)

Contents

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*)

Organization of work

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98-81579 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Carrenza (Guatemala), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/371–S/1998/848, A/53/380, A/53/381 and A/53/416; A/C.3/53/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/72–S/1998/156, A/53/95–S/1998/311, A/53/129–E/1998/58, A/53/204, A/53/371–S/1998/848, A/53/382, A/53/383 and A/53/416)

1. **Mr. Galuška** (Czech Republic) said that, despite some positive developments in global activities to fight drug production and trafficking, there were still more than 200 million drug users worldwide. Given the scope and seriousness of the problem, the international community had finally realized that cooperation was necessary. The General Assembly's special session of 1998 had been an excellent example of that change of perspective. The documents adopted as a result of the special session — the Political Declaration, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the Action Plan — represented a sound basis for such cooperation. The international community was motivated by a common political will and had a powerful tool for the task: the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). However, UNDCP could not reach its targets without adequate funding.

2. The Czech Republic had gone through a difficult transition period and remained sensitive to global economic turbulence. Nevertheless, it continued to pay close attention to the drug problem, primarily in two major areas: law enforcement and demand reduction. To address the root causes of drug abuse, it was necessary to strengthen the role of the family and improve the educational system, with the necessary support from highly qualified experts in that field, and, with their assistance, to give priority to the prevention of drug addiction among young people, particularly schoolchildren.

3. Global cooperation could benefit greatly from activities at the regional level. With substantial support from UNDCP, his country had developed close and successful cooperation with neighbouring countries. The Czech Republic looked forward to the next review meeting, to be held in Ljubljana in November 1998.

4. **Mr. Tabone** (Malta) said that, in the past, many countries had underestimated the threat posed by illegal activities related to drugs. No nation was immune to that scourge, nor could any nation stand up to it alone. Bilateral and multilateral activities spearheaded by UNDCP had yielded encouraging results. The current challenge was to maintain and increase the momentum created by the General Assembly's special session.

5. Owing to its geostrategic location at the centre of the Mediterranean, its small size and its limited interdiction capacity, which stood in contrast to the financial might of transnational crime, Malta was particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking, money-laundering, contraband and illegal migration, all of which posed a threat to its economic and fiscal system and to the maintenance of law and order. Malta had therefore entered into a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements with its neighbours in the Mediterranean and with the European Union, and fully supported the initiatives taken within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership to combat organized crime and the illegal drug trade.

6. Malta was pleased that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/14, had endorsed the decision taken by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its seventh session, to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention against transnational organized crime. Malta would also welcome international legal instruments to combat trafficking in women and children and the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition. It was important that Member States should continue to monitor the implementation of the 1994 Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan.

7. Each year, money-laundering involved some $300 billion. If left unchecked, money-laundering could erode a country's financial institutions and threaten its very sovereignty. Malta had therefore introduced laws to improve the supervision of offshore banking institutions in its territory and to enforce existing regulations for the prevention of money-laundering.

8. **Mr. Al-Ethary** (Yemen) said that the current scope and diversity of criminal activities throughout the world resulted from a combination of interdependent endogenous and exogenous factors. The fight against crime called for a genuine political will at the national level, supported by constructive and effective international cooperation in a context of transparency and openness. His Government welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General on the issue

and the efforts made at the international level to fight crime, including the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime and the resolutions adopted at the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo in 1995. In the context of administrative and financial reforms of State institutions, the Government of Yemen, which had recently launched a campaign to prohibit the bearing of firearms and to promulgate laws to that effect, considered that regional and international cooperation were essential in order to fight crime, which posed a threat to the economies and the stability of all societies.

9. Like the rest of the international community, Yemen had realized that crime and drugs were inseparable and had become aware of the enormity of the task incumbent on the international community in the fight against drug trafficking, which posed a threat to all humanity. While it supported the strengthening of measures to combat that scourge and the adoption of laws that provided for the punishment of those who engaged in drug trafficking out of greed or for other reasons, Yemen felt that all necessary assistance and support should be given to drug addicts. Like all other countries, Yemen participated in efforts to combat drug trafficking; because of its geographical location and the length of its coastline, traffickers sought to use Yemen as a transit point. Although its security services had thwarted many attempts to bring drugs into the country, the Government of Yemen requested specialized regional and international services and the competent international agencies to assist it in combating that scourge, in the common interest.

10. **Ms. Gilbert-Roberts** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which were Members of the Organization, said that the drug control efforts which had been made by the United Nations for nearly 25 years had been largely unsuccessful because they had focused on producer countries and had not been matched by commensurate efforts in the consumer countries. Yet drugs had a pernicious effect on all countries, whatever their developmental status, political system or cultural orientation, and every Member State was affected.

11. The CARICOM States recognized the tremendous efforts which had been made by the international community during the United Nations Decade Against Drug Abuse not only to reduce demand but also to combat the activities which constituted the other links in the chain. They welcomed the various reports of the Secretary-General on the question and the special session of the General Assembly, in which they had actively participated.

12. Because of their small size, geophysical structure and fragile economies, the CARICOM States were especially vulnerable to the negative effects of illicit drug activities. The primary drug produced and consumed in the subregion was cannabis. Since some of its components had beneficial effects, particularly in the treatment of glaucoma, there were calls for the decriminalization of its use. The CARICOM States, however, remained committed to the prohibition of the illicit use of the substance, which gave rise to undesirable psychoactive reactions in users.

13. While the CARICOM States had achieved significant success in the eradication of cannabis crops, they had had less success in curtailing the trans-shipment of other drugs through their territories. Trans-shipment activities had actually intensified, particularly in island States where drug traffickers stored their cargo temporarily. In respect of cocaine, for example, only 50 per cent of shipments reached their destination, and the rest was destroyed en route or filtered into the populations of the trans-shipment States. There was therefore an escalation in drug addiction in the region, particularly among young people.

14. The CARICOM States lacked the necessary resources to establish long-term detoxification programmes. Despite generous contributions from the private sector and non-governmental and voluntary organizations, they were obliged to divert scarce resources from pressing developmental needs to deal with drug production and consumption.

15. It was also a matter for concern that, under the combined effect of globalization, liberalization and the rapid advance in technology, drug traffickers could more easily transfer funds and establish new transnational markets, while the legitimate exports of CARICOM countries continued to be subjected to discriminatory practices to the detriment of the economic and social development of those countries. For small States such as those in the Caribbean, globalization had actually exacerbated the economic crisis.

16. Nevertheless, the Governments of the CARICOM States were making every effort to prevent lucrative illicit drug activities from corrupting society. Aware of the tremendous advantages of regional cooperation, they valued the technical and financial support which UNDCP and the European Union were continuing to provide for the implementation of the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action. That plan, which constituted the principal framework for regional cooperation on drugs, also helped States in the implementation of international drug control treaties. The CARICOM States remained committed to full adherence to the three international drug control conventions and some

of them had also entered into bilateral agreements with the United States of America, in 1997.

17. It was essential for States to carry out joint action in the area of law enforcement. The CARICOM States, whose populations were small, were concerned about the proliferation of firearms, which had led to an escalation in the number of armed crimes, often culminating in multiple murders. They had therefore become signatories to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

18. Measures had been taken to combat money-laundering in countries with offshore banking facilities and to allow the confiscation of assets acquired by illicit means. A training centre had been established in 1997 in Jamaica; over 300 law enforcement officers had already been trained in interdiction and intelligence methods. Since 1996, law enforcement officials had increased their cooperation in the exchange of information on bank accounts and suspicious financial transactions. In a growing number of States of the region, banks were required to report transactions exceeding certain thresholds.

19. The CARICOM States fully recognized that the problem of illicit drugs could not be divorced from the broader question of economic and social development, particularly unemployment and poverty. They therefore welcomed the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development.

20. The CARICOM States were in favour of a holistic approach to alternative development: basic values must be upheld, it must be ensured that replacement activities were reasonably lucrative, and international cooperation must be strengthened so as to encourage capital flows and development financing both in the public sector and in the private sector.

21. **Ms. Bennani** (Morocco) said that the drug problem had been exacerbated because of globalization, the liberalization of international markets, the abolition of borders and the revolution in communications. The drug trade thus played an essential role in the spread of many evils, in particular organized crime, international terrorism, trafficking in firearms, money-laundering and the corruption of state institutions. The proliferation of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances produced in laboratories, which were more difficult to control than cultivated drugs, was liable to nullify the efforts made by the international community. The General Assembly, at its twentieth special session, had adopted a global strategy to reduce illicit drug trafficking, abuse and production by the year 2008 by strengthening international cooperation and financial support for alternative activities.

22. UNDCP must be provided with the necessary resources to implement that strategy. Efforts to combat money-laundering must be conducted in conjunction with other countries and must target the main criminal groups. The adoption of a convention against organized transnational crime was therefore essential.

23. Morocco was concerned about respecting its international commitments arising from international conventions and was implementing a drug control policy based on supply reduction, control of illicit trafficking and intensification of international cooperation. It had decided to secure its maritime borders in order to limit drug trafficking by maritime routes and discourage the clandestine infiltration of illegal migrants to Europe; it had also established rules and mechanisms for cooperation with both the European Police Office and other regional and international bodies, and was carrying out alternative development projects to ensure sustainable development.

24. Her delegation welcomed the efforts being made in the north of the country. Morocco was also endeavouring to broaden its cooperation with its various partners, particularly the members of the European Union, both in the fight against drugs and in the financing of development projects.

25. The Moroccan delegation welcomed the efforts being made by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to mobilize resources and hoped that donor countries and international financial institutions would adopt an equally resolute approach to providing the necessary aid to countries that were determined to combat the scourge of drugs. It appealed to the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the United Nations African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) to enable it to assist African States in the implementation of crime prevention strategies and to strengthen coordination between law enforcement agencies at the regional and subregional levels.

26. **Mr. Botnaru** (Republic of Moldova), speaking also on behalf of Ukraine, supported the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. The Moldovan and Ukrainian Governments were deeply concerned at the increasing threat which organized crime and the problem of illicit drugs posed to development and to mankind as a whole. Because of their global dimensions, the two problems could be addressed effectively only through international cooperation and improved coordination of

national, regional and international efforts to deal with them. In that connection, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were following with interest the preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, which was due to be held in Austria in the year 2000 and noted with satisfaction the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the drug problem, which had been held in New York in June 1998. They supported in particular the measures stipulated in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and Alternative Development.

27. Organized crime and money-laundering had become major concerns of the international community, particularly in countries with economies in transition. Also of concern was the illicit trafficking in drugs and arms, which negatively affected the economic development of the latter countries and undermined the confidence of the population in the process of reform. In recent years, the problem of the transit of illicit drugs through the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine had become more acute. Even though in the Republic of Moldova the problem was not as severe as in other countries, its geographical location on the "Balkan route" and the situation in the eastern region of the country posed genuine difficulties.

28. The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were actively cooperating at the bilateral and multilateral levels in crime prevention and in combating illicit trafficking in arms and drugs. In collaboration with the Russian Federation and Belarus, they had also developed a highly effective initiative known as "Kanal", under which the law enforcement authorities of the different countries pooled their efforts and resources to strengthen border surveillance. Since drug traffickers tended to make Central and Eastern Europe the centre of their activities, other countries of the region were invited to take part in the implementation of the above-mentioned initiative.

29. As parties to the three main international Conventions on narcotic drug control, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine had always supported measures taken by the international community to ensure the implementation of the Conventions. They had also made substantial efforts to improve their national capacities to combat illicit drug and arms trafficking and money-laundering. They welcomed the activities of UNDCP and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, which had prepared and promoted the implementation of many decisions relating to the fight against the illegal production, trafficking in and sale of drugs, and noted with satisfaction that one of the priorities of UNDCP was to better coordinate the activities of the various United Nations bodies seeking to reduce the production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and to strengthen the capacities of drug control institutions at both the national and international levels. The establishment of an international law enforcement academy in Budapest should help to improve the training of law enforcement officials and promote joint efforts to combat transnational organized crime.

30. Like other new democracies confronted with the problems of drugs, arms trafficking and money-laundering and lacking the institutional structures and financial resources to implement programmes for the education and treatment of drug addicts, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were interested in strengthening their cooperation with UNDCP and CICP and in seeing the launching of new assistance projects. They hoped that the future activities of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) would take into account the specific problems of their two countries.

31. Only concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels could strengthen the global fight against illicit drugs and organized crime.

32. **Mr. Chaturvedi** (India) noted that the success of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had perhaps been the most significant development in relation to the world drug problem. The adoption of the documents of the session at a high political level reflected a new international consensus and will to act in a concerted manner. Member States recognized that they shared a common responsibility in the fight against the global problem of drugs and that a balanced and integrated approach was needed to reduce by the year 2008 the trafficking in and abuse and production of illicit drugs. Equally important were the commitments relating to money-laundering, amphetamine-type stimulants and judicial cooperation. India was of the view that the strategies adopted to reduce supply and demand should be complementary and take into account the role of poverty and underdevelopment as well as the importance of alternative development programmes, respect for national sovereignty, and international cooperation in enforcement efforts.

33. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention should enable the United Nations to better take into account the linkages between drug trafficking, international crime, money-laundering, terrorism and trafficking in people.

34. The success in reducing production and in dismantling drug cartels in the Andean region, encouraging cooperation between drug producers and national and international

authorities and the reduction in demand in some consumption centres also constituted notable advances. The efforts being made by the countries concerned with the support of UNDCP, donor countries, regional development banks and the World Bank to devise alternative development programmes and projects in countries that were dependent on the drug industry were also encouraging.

35. Nevertheless, numerous areas of concern remained. The trend towards integration of criminal enterprises as markets became more integrated and the exploitation of the advantages provided by globalization to facilitate their operations, including financial transactions, loopholes in legislation that allowed access to banking institutions for purposes of money-laundering, the vulnerability of youth to drugs, the increase in the production and use of amphetamine-type stimulants and weaknesses in controls on the diversion of chemical precursors were all problems that needed to be tackled.

36. The progress made in certain areas should not obscure problems whose ramifications went far beyond drugs and crime. The links between poverty, underdevelopment, drug cultivation, production and trafficking, organized crime, arms trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons and money-laundering varied from area to area. In some regions of the world, drug trafficking was combined with religious extremism, the easy availability of arms, weak governmental authority, lax border controls, terrorism and mercenary activity, and systematic violations of basic human rights tolerated by certain elements of society, the security forces and Governments, and the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention hardly had the resources to address all those problems. That was one reason why the United Nations had suspended its activities in Afghanistan.

37. As the recent terrorist attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam demonstrated, it was unconscionable to ignore such dangers, whatever the reason. It had unfortunately to be noted that the United Nations, because of its available resources and the mandate it had been given, was not currently in a position to deal with the situation. After the dangers were recognized and the priorities set, the resources made available to the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention should be enhanced and the international community should be requested to amend its mandate by elevating the struggle against such "complex" problems to a more political level.

38. Many heads of State or Government had warned in the general debate of the threat posed by terrorism. At the previous session, his country had also warned, during the debate on the Secretary-General's reform programme, of the dangers of tokenism where the challenge of terrorism interfered with good relations between States and hindered the movement of people and goods.

39. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention could help neighbouring countries to cope with the dangers of the production and transit of drugs by offering them technical assistance, and the United Nations system as a whole, with the help of the international community and of the countries concerned, could develop a more integrated and comprehensive approach. At the bilateral level, his country welcomed the forthcoming resumption of the dialogue at ministerial level with Pakistan on the issue of drugs. Lastly, it supported the drafting of a framework convention on transnational organized crime and of its proposed protocols, and the efforts of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to strengthen its operational capacities for technical assistance in areas such as the rule of law and juvenile justice.

40. **Ms. Vargas** (Costa Rica) said that drugs were a threat to democracy and to political systems throughout the world. As the President of her country had pointed out at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, drugs were the first worldwide aggression in history. Nobody was safe from them, young people in particular, and efforts to combat the worldwide drug problem required an integrated approach, aimed both at the production and consumption of drugs, and at drug trafficking and money-laundering.

41. Her country was a small, peaceful and democratic State with a population of only 3.5 million. The resources deployed since the abolition of the armed forces 50 years earlier had made it possible to strengthen health and education programmes, but they were not equal to the task of combating the scourge of drugs. Costa Rica needed international cooperation in order to establish a civilian peace force mandated to combat drug traffickers, but without abandoning its social programmes, since the country's geographical situation meant that it was likely to be used as a bridgehead for supplying the major centres of consumption.

42. Her country had two types of specialized police forces. Some were mandated to combat drugs and were answerable to a deputy minister, while others came under the body responsible for carrying out judicial investigations. Costa Rica had acceded to the international instruments dealing with the fight against drugs and was willing to become a party to any new instrument. Amendments had been made to the country's criminal legislation, in particular to the provisions of illegal earnings. Sixty per cent of the funds confiscated from drug traffickers was used to finance the

implementation of training programmes and the purchase of equipment for the civilian police, while the remaining 40 per cent was earmarked for programmes to promote public awareness of the danger of drugs. In 1997 Costa Rica had in fact seized 9 tons of cocaine and had incinerated large quantities of marijuana.

43. Although her country was no more than a centre for transit towards the north, it needed international assistance in order to purchase equipment and to familiarize its staff with new technologies. Only transnational cooperation could resolve a transnational problem.

44. **Mr. Amirkhizi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was essential to adopt a global strategy and to elaborate an international convention in order to combat transnational organized crime which was constantly increasing and threatened not only the security of nations but also their political stability and social order. Progress had been made in preparatory work on the convention and, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/14, the decision would be taken to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee responsible for elaborating an international convention on all aspects of efforts to combat transnational organized crime and to discuss the elaboration, as appropriate, of international instruments addressing trafficking in women and children and combating the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in firearms and other activities. The new instrument should concentrate on the adoption of practical policies and action to confront the existing threats and should be universally implemented. Mention should be made in that connection of the recommendations adopted by the Asian Regional Ministerial Workshop on Transnational Crime and Corruption, held at Manila in March 1998, particularly the Manila Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Transnational Crime. The 1998 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances could be taken as a model.

45. With respect to extradition, countries needed to be encouraged to expand mutual legal assistance and enact effective extradition legislation and bilateral treaties. The draft convention should also take into account the constitutional requirements of countries with respect to the extradition of nationals.

46. Another important issue was the use of territories as transit routes by international networks of drug traffickers. His country's geographical situation had made it extremely vulnerable in that respect. The draft convention should take into consideration the problems of transit countries, find ways to prevent laundering of criminal proceeds and mobilize the support of the international community to assist the transit countries in their fight against transnational criminal networks.

47. The foundations of any civilized society, namely morality and good governance, would be threatened if concerted international action was not taken to combat corruption. The poor and the weakest segments of society were particularly at risk. International cooperation in that field should be strengthened under a new convention. Corruption had undermined the foundations of the economy in developing countries and had considerably hindered the implementation of national development plans and the operation of economic and financial organizations. It should be noted that corruption had a strong criminogenic effect, and action should be taken to prosecute multinational and foreign companies which used methods to spread corruption among the citizens of target countries. The money and property obtained from such practices should be reimbursed to the country which had sustained such damage.

48. The abundance of firearms in a society, particularly in the absence of strict control regulations, facilitated the commission of violent crimes and posed a particular problem in countries racked by internal conflicts or social disorder. The illicit trafficking in firearms was growing rapidly as a result of the lack of harmonization of national legislation, regulations and policies. If the production of firearms was not regulated, it would be practically impossible to prevent their use for criminal purposes.

49. International and regional organizations as well as interested countries should provide technical assistance and advisory services to countries that needed them. Technical assistance programmes, while responding to the specific needs of different regions, should strengthen national capacities and also facilitate the exchange of information on legislative measures. Such programmes should provide for the organization of training courses and workshops for national organizations and officials responsible for criminal justice and for the development and implementation of bilateral, subregional, regional and international initiatives on the issue of criminal justice.

50. The Islamic Republic of Iran particularly supported the development and implementation of strategies for combating transnational organized crime through the expansion of cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, the exchange of experience between developed and developing countries, the modernization of extradition agreements, the promotion of the role of the mass media in crime prevention, the adoption of new urban crime prevention strategies, the elimination of violence against

women and children, the modernization of criminal justice and the confiscation of proceeds from criminal activities.

51. **Mr. Rabuka** (Fiji) said that the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had provided the international community with an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of activities undertaken and to work out new strategies to fight the drug problem, focusing efforts essentially on demand reduction, the education of the population on the harmful effects of illicit synthetic stimulants, mutual legal assistance, the transfer of criminal proceedings, the establishment of new rules to prevent money-laundering and the establishment of alternative development programmes designed to eliminate illicit drug crops. His Government supported the role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and believed that it needed additional resources in order to carry out its activities. The strategic location of Fiji in the South Pacific had allowed international criminal organizations to use if as a staging point for their illegal activities. A number of laws had been enacted to deal with those illegal activities. They included the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act of 1997, under which the Fijian authorities could grant to, or request from other countries, assistance in the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes, and the Proceeds of Crimes Act, which authorized the confiscation of proceeds and properties from criminal activities; those provisions were intended to be complementary to the informal assistance already provided by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and under relevant extradition legislation. The Substance Abuse Advisory Council Act, which was aimed at developing comprehensive substance abuse prevention, eradication and research programmes, had also been enacted. Non-governmental organizations and civil society were also involved in those efforts.

52. Given the linkage between drug abuse and drug trafficking, on the one hand, and poverty and unemployment, on the other, the international community should help small developing States to implement job-creation, educational and capacity-building programmes in order to help the most vulnerable population groups, which were likely to be the victims of drug abuse. Alternative development activities should therefore be seen as the only way of meeting the challenge. With declining official development assistance, uneven distribution of capital flows and the inability of small island States to take full advantage of the process of globalization and trade liberalization, it was imperative that such States should be given increased economic assistance in order to facilitate the implementation of effective programmes at the national level.

53. **Mr. Al-Humaimdi** (Iraq) said that at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem, the international community had declared its determination to resolve that problem, which had become widespread. For its part, Iraq had long expressed its desire to cooperate with the specialized international agencies within the framework of efforts to combat drug trafficking and had, *inter alia,* acceded to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Protocol of 1972 amending that Convention, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. Those instruments were now part of Iraq's legislation on drug matters. That legislation, in particular Act No. 68 of 1965, as well as the efforts made by the Ministries of Health and the Interior and the National Narcotics Control Board, had been largely responsible for making Iraq one of the few countries in the world where drugs were not produced and where trafficking did not occur. Moreover, specialized services organized special prevention programmes for all levels of society.

54. The economic sanctions imposed on Iraq had caused considerable losses of life and property in all areas, including the fight against drugs. Deprived of the necessary financial resources, Iraq could no longer participate in international and regional conferences and meetings devoted to combating drug trafficking, in particular the activities of INTERPOL, since October 1997. Furthermore, although the absence of a central authority in the country's autonomous northern region had paved the way for trafficking with neighbouring countries, the authorities were making sure that they informed the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, as they had done in 1992. The Iraqi Government fully appreciated the international community's efforts and was prepared to cooperate in order to put an end to drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in drug-producing, drug-consuming and transit countries.

55. **Mr. Roustam-Zadeh** (Azerbaijan) noted that, on the eve of the third millennium, drug abuse was prevalent throughout the world and hampered the development of almost all States. For its part, Azerbaijan supported the provisions of the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session and applied all its recommendations. Drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking were particularly dangerous for States that had recently regained their sovereignty and were having difficulties in implementing programmes relating to the banning and suppression of drugs.

56. Since achieving independence, Azerbaijan had been giving high priority to the fight against drug abuse, despite

considerable economic difficulties stemming from the occupation by Armenia of over 20 per cent of its territory and the presence of nearly a million refugees and displaced persons. Moreover, the obstacles encountered in the "Balkans connection" had forced international criminal organizations to seek new routes for channelling drugs to Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including across the borders of Azerbaijan controlled by the Armenian armed forces. In fact, occupied Azerbaijani territory, where narcotics were manufactured from crops cultivated locally, had become a transit point for drugs. Thus the violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity was helping the international drug mafia to globalize its activities and conquer new markets.

57. In Azerbaijan itself, the situation only deteriorated from year to year. Drug-related crime, particularly violent crime, and the confiscation of drugs were on the rise. There was a growing number of drug addicts and, apart from the cannabis and opium which could already be found in the region, new narcotic drugs were making their appearance. Azerbaijan's geographic location (at the crossroads of Europe and Asia) and climate (plants used in the manufacture of narcotic drugs could be grown there), the opening of new transport routes and the exploitation of oil in the Caspian Sea were all attractive elements to international organized crime, which sought to make the country an area for the transit and sale of new narcotic drugs. Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani border police and customs services and the law enforcement authorities responsible for drug control had but limited resources (particularly in the areas of control, communication and training) to combat the phenomenon.

58. Nonetheless, the Azerbaijani authorities were doing their utmost to shield the country from the influence of drug traffickers. The drug control policy was among the national priorities: a government commission, headed by a Deputy Prime Minister, had been set up and a national drug control programme had been adopted. The efforts made within that framework, political stability and the country's economic boom, as well as the history and traditions of the Azerbaijani people, had already yielded concrete results, which should be reinforced through support from international organizations. Moreover, campaigns were being organized with a view to building awareness of the drug problem and of the need to return to traditional values.

59. Azerbaijan needed assistance in developing drug control legislation, and with materials for educating youth and measures to reduce the demand for drugs and to treat drug addicts. In that connection, contacts must be strengthened at the intergovernmental level in the areas of drug-abuse control and the exchange of information on drug traffickers.

60. His delegation was grateful to UNDCP for the assistance, particularly the financial assistance, it had already furnished in all those areas. Azerbaijan was convinced that, with further assistance from the United Nations system, not only would the country be able to combat drug addiction and drug trafficking with the necessary effectiveness but that the situation in the entire region would be improved as well. The UNDCP agreement concluded in Baku in February 1997 relating to illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs in the Near and Middle East recommended that all States should condemn the violation of national borders and territorial integrity and recognize that foreign occupation could hamper the fight against drug trafficking.

61. On the initiative of Azerbaijan, that agreement recommended, in particular, facilitating the extradition of persons accused of drug-related offences; denying such persons political asylum, citizenship or any other form of protection; and expelling them. Azerbaijan also proposed that the countries concerned should deny such persons the opportunity to become naturalized, to secure a residence permit, to work, to start a business or a gambling establishment and to invest. Since casinos, lottery games and other games of chance could serve as fronts for laundering drug money, international instruments should require States to inform law enforcement authorities of the opening of gambling establishments and monitor their activities more closely. Lastly, in view of the danger of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, a stronger international mechanism should be established in order to ensure that all States assumed their responsibility in that area.

62 **Ms. Aponte de Zacklin** (Venezuela) said that the danger of drugs and drug-related crime, aggravated by the processes of globalization and economic transformation, constituted a priority concern of the international community. At the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, States had undertaken a firm commitment to work together to seek solutions to that scourge. On that occasion, the President of Venezuela had reaffirmed his full support for the Political Declaration adopted by consensus. In keeping with that Declaration, strategies must be undertaken within the framework of concerted regional and international action on the basis of the principles of equality, shared responsibility and full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

63. The integrated approach taken by Venezuela stressed prevention, since civil society was involved in the efforts of the National Drug Control Commission within the framework of community activities and education campaigns. Aware that strengthened international cooperation was necessary to combat drugs effectively, her Government had taken initiatives designed to strengthen its ties with other countries and multilateral organizations. It had ratified an agreement with Guyana; organized the first meeting of the joint Venezuelan-Mexican Commission, held in Caracas; concluded a cooperation agreement with Colombia; and participated in the twenty-second session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) on money-laundering and the third meeting of a group of CICAD/OAS experts, held in Washington.

64. **Ms. Sandru** (Romania) said that Romania, like other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was affected by the drug problem. The participation of Romania's President in the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had demonstrated the country's resolve to play an active role in the international struggle against that scourge. Although the country was not yet equipped with all the structures necessary to combat illicit drug trafficking effectively, the Romanian authorities had taken action in three areas: legislative improvement, institutional reform and the launching of awareness-building programmes. A bill on the campaign against illicit drug consumption and drug trafficking would soon be submitted to the Parliament, and Romania had ratified all three international conventions relating to those issues. The National Programme to Combat Illicit Drugs provided for the establishment of an Interministerial Committee to coordinate national efforts. In addition, a national centre for the study of organized crime and the drug problem, and for research and training, would be established in the near future.

65. Romania had benefited from the support of UNDCP experts in introducing necessary amendments to its legislation and modernizing its drug analysis laboratories. Activities carried out thus far by UNDCP demonstrated the Programme's capacity to fulfil the new mandates assigned to it by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session.

66. With regard to regional and bilateral cooperation, Romania had concluded a number of bilateral agreements with Governments of neighbouring countries, and of other countries in Europe or on other continents, with a view to implementing joint policies and programmes and launching crime-prevention and law enforcement mechanisms with respect to drugs. Those arrangements were aimed at combating international terrorism; illicit trafficking in radioactive materials, weapons and ammunition; trafficking in women and children; and other drug-related criminal activities. Romania had efficiently cooperated in that field with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the European Police Office (EUROPOL) and the European Union under its Phare programme.

67. On the subject of crime prevention and criminal justice, international organized crime and drug traffic were interrelated scourges, threatening security, stability and democratic development. The new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention ought to enable the United Nations to respond effectively to those challenges. The Centre for International Crime Prevention should set clear priorities and expand its operations.

68. In accordance with the recommendations of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime and the Council of Europe, Romania had continued to strengthen its legal machinery, develop preventive mechanisms against crime and reform its criminal justice system. In April 1993, a police squad was set up to counter organized crime and corruption and neutralize the transnational crime networks. In addition, an inter-ministerial council to combat crime, established in October 1995, had elaborated an anti-crime programme centred on updating the relevant legislation, improving the skills of law-enforcement personnel, developing a partnership between the police and the communities, and making the public aware of the crime problem by means of other programmes that sought to reach the groups at risk, such as children, young people, women and others. The Romanian Parliament had almost concluded consideration of an important draft law on money-laundering.

69. In addition to bilateral arrangements relating to international drug control, Romania had concluded a number of trilateral agreements with neighbouring countries like Bulgaria, Turkey, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as a way of developing regional cooperation in the struggle against transnational organized crime. Another significant step had been the recent establishment in Bucharest of a centre for southeast European cooperation in combating corruption and organized crime.

70. Romania would participate actively in the preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which would be held in Austria in 2000.

71. **Mr. Hadjiargyrou** (Cyprus) said that his Government's determination to deal with organized crime

was reflected in its ratification of the United Nations conventions intended to promote international cooperation in the area of criminal justice and of two related European conventions. As an associated country, Cyprus was closely cooperating with the European Union on transnational crime. It had also concluded bilateral agreements with most of its neighbouring countries as well as others, with a view to combating the resultant problems. Nationally, Cyprus was hosting liaison officers from 17 countries and worked with INTERPOL and other agencies because it attached great importance to exchanging information and intelligence.

72. Over the past two decades, the drug traffic had taken on unprecedented proportions and had to be dealt with in a multilateral context. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly had proved that the international community, at the threshold of the third millennium, was resolved to confront the drug problem and provide the impetus for sustained action on the basis of cooperation on all levels, international, national and local. The international community's efforts, however, would not have the desired results if the root causes of the problem were not attacked, namely, poverty and socio-economic imbalances, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities and the alienation so prevalent. The reduction of drug consumption was an integral part of the overall strategy, which had to be combined with steps taken nationally and internationally. It was also important to take an integrated approach that would eliminate the cultivation of the plants used in producing illicit drugs while financing crop substitution and setting up social reintegration programmes for drug addicts. Police and judicial cooperation must also be extended in order to pursue drug traffickers systematically.

73. Although Cyprus had a relatively drug-free society, the Government did not underestimate the threat of the infiltration of drugs into the culture. A public information campaign was part of its national policy to drive home the message that drugs were a mortal danger. A national committee to prevent drug trafficking and drug use had been established, and its task was to coordinate activities and provide advice in matters of prevention and information.

74. Because of its geographical position, Cyprus could easily be used by the drug cartels for funnelling drugs into Europe. That was why the Government was carrying out a policy of border controls, in cooperation with other countries that had an interest in intercepting the flow of drugs into Europe. Cyprus was also seeking to protect itself against money-laundering by criminal groups, an area on which UNDCP and many Governments were focusing their efforts. As stated in a recent United States State Department report, the Cypriot Government had been extremely active in 1997 in its efforts to implement provisions of its anti-money-laundering legislation. A UNDCP report dated 29 May 1998 also cited those efforts, as did the report of a Council of Europe committee of experts.

75. Cyprus would continue to fight against drugs and the illegal activities associated with them, as evidenced by the steps the Government had already taken. Unfortunately, the continuing occupation of 37 per cent of the country's territory was preventing the Government from exercising effective control in the occupied area, where serious criminal activity was reported to be taking place. Organized crime was likely to continue to expand in keeping with the pace of globalization. A small State like Cyprus therefore considered it imperative to strengthen international cooperation.

Organization of work

76. **The Chairman** informed members that it had been decided at a meeting of the Bureau the previous day that the Committee would use one meeting each week to take decisions on the draft proposals before it. The date would be announced as much in advance as possible. The Bureau had felt that delegations could thus better organize their work schedules. Accordingly, the Committee would take decisions on all drafts submitted under agenda items 100 (Social development), 101 (Crime prevention and criminal justice) and 102 (International drug control) during the morning meeting on Friday, 16 October. The afternoon meeting that day had been cancelled in order to allow a discussion group of the Third and Second Committees to meet on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

77. If time allowed, the Committee should plan to take decisions on all other draft proposals in the afternoon meetings on Thursday, 22 October, and Friday, 30 October. It would be informed in advance of the draft proposals in question. The Bureau hoped that by thus organizing the Committee's work, consultations would be facilitated, especially for the smaller delegations.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/53/SR.11

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 November 1998

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 11th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Ms. Sandru (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)
later: Mr. Hachani (Chairman) ..... (Tunisia)

Contents

Agenda item 100: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)*

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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In the absence of Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Ms. Sandru (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/53/L.6)

1. **Ms. De Álvarez** (Dominican Republic), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.6 entitled "The International Year of Older Persons, 1999" on behalf of the sponsors, announced that Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bolivia, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Guatemala, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, San Marino, South Africa, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Uruguay and Venezuela had joined the list of sponsors.

2. The sponsors believed that older persons were an important factor in development at all levels, and therefore in the draft resolution encouraged all States, the United Nations system and all other actors, in reaching out for a society for all ages, to take advantage of the International Year of Older Persons so as to increase awareness of the challenge of the demographic ageing of societies, the individual and social needs of older persons and the contributions of older persons to society.

3. Although there were socio-economic plans, projects, activities and initiatives in place in the Organization, practical strategies still had to be mapped out throughout the system and at national level to ensure that older people were involved in such plans and activities without discrimination of any kind. Also, to make a society for all ages a reality in the new millennium, an evaluation of the individual and collective contributions of older people should be carried out in order to eliminate preconceived ideas about older people.

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/371-S/1998/848, A/53/380, 381 and 416; A/C.3/53/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/72-S/1998/156, A/53/95-S/1998/311, A/53/129- E/1998/58, A/53/204, A/53/371-S/1998/848, A/53/382, 383 and 416)

4. **Ms. Arystanbekova** (Kazakhstan), speaking on item 102 on behalf also of Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, said that illicit drug-trafficking could even affect the political independence of States and endanger international security, and that the worldwide epidemic could be countered only by coordinated, effective action by the international community as a whole. The United Nations had an expanding role in coordinating that action, and she therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), particularly in respect of large-scale plans to eradicate illicit crops.

5. She expressed support for the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session and particularly for the principle of common and shared responsibility which the Declaration contained. The countries on whose behalf she spoke intended to contribute to international efforts in the areas of demand reduction, alternative development, eradication of illicit crops, control over chemical precursors, manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, combating laundering of drug money and strengthening judicial cooperation, and were making the necessary national and regional efforts to ensure implementation of the agreed measures and coordination of their joint efforts.

6. She recalled that in October 1992, an agreement had been signed by the Ministers of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States on cooperation in combating the drug traffic, laying the legal foundations for cooperation between the various bodies responsible for internal affairs in the Commonwealth: currently, the Commonwealth's law-enforcement agencies all used the same data bank containing about 100,000 data points on individuals involved in drug-trafficking. They also had a joint collection of over 400 different narcotics, psychotropics and other virulent substances, with new samples constantly being added.

7. In May 1996 the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States had approved an intergovernmental programme of joint measures to combat organized crime and other dangerous crimes within the Commonwealth up to the year 2000. Drug-trafficking was covered by the programme. In November 1997, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth had approved a model act on drug-trafficking.

8. To ensure cooperation and exchange of experience and to improve the skills of staff, there was a constant exchange between the Commonwealth countries of regulatory and legislative documents, methodological materials and statistics. Joint study and pre- and in-service training programmes were conducted for staff of anti-drug units.

9. Currently under way was a joint operation entitled "KANAL" aimed at closing supply routes; it had succeeded

in closing thousands of international drug distribution routes. The operation had been commended at the meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) held in Vienna in September 1998.

10. The relevant subregional structures were being established, to operate in close contact with the United Nations. Specifically, in response to the deteriorating drug situation in Central Asia, in May 1996 Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and UNDCP had signed a memorandum of understanding on combating drug-trafficking and abuse. The Russian Federation had acceded to the memorandum subsequently, and a decision had been taken to hold an international drug conference in Almaty in early 1999. Also, the Commonwealth countries were taking steps to set up a network of interlinked, bilateral treaties; already, dozens of international drug distribution channels had been discovered and shut down.

11. As a result of the measures taken, it had become possible to assess and predict developments in the drug situation and to develop a unified strategy to combat international drug crime in the light of changing conditions throughout the Commonwealth.

12. She reiterated the commitment of the countries on whose behalf she spoke to the closest possible cooperation with the United Nations system and with other Member States in the war against drugs.

13. **Mr. Kongsiri** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the outcome of the war against drugs, despite many tactical and moral victories, was still far from certain: the illegal drug trade, accounting for about $400 billion or 8 per cent of total international trade, was more than enough to bail out the world's ailing economies, and like any other trade with a successful product, had adapted to changing global conditions and diversified into new markets worldwide.

14. South-East Asia, a natural geographical haven for drug production and trafficking, was vulnerable in the drug war: although some progress had been made in suppressing opium poppy and cannabis crops, local consumption was adding to the existing problems. By affecting the very fabric of society and undermining national development, drugs were of particular concern for ASEAN. Moreover, given the close links between the illicit drug trade and other transnational crimes such as money-laundering and arms smuggling, the perpetrators could pose serious political and security threats to the region.

15. It appeared that the technology and affluence that accompanied globalization had led to a proliferation in the types of drugs on the market: while plant-based drugs remained a major threat, synthetics, particularly the amphetamine-type stimulants, were rapidly increasing their market share and becoming a serious menace to the region. Such synthetics were easy to produce in clandestine laboratories, easy to traffic, highly profitable for producers and cheap for consumers. Given the wide availability of precursor chemicals and the flexibility of manufacturing techniques, controlling the supply of amphetamine-type stimulants was a daunting task. The diversion of precursor chemicals from legitimate trade and the growing illicit trade in them were major challenges in efforts to contain a relatively new but potentially even more insidious menace.

16. He stressed that the increasingly complex drug problem must be attacked on all fonts at the national and international levels, and recalled that in South-East Asia, national efforts to curb the drug problem had shown results. Also, the crop-substitution strategy there had proven successful and UNDCP, which sponsored the programme, was considering using it as a model for countries elsewhere.

17. The ASEAN Governments had given priority to a wide range of programmes including drug suppression, strict enforcement of tough drug laws, drug prevention, rehabilitation of addicts and promotion of public awareness. That diversity of approaches reflected the long-held recognition of the ASEAN Governments that the drug problem was multidimensional and that supply reduction was at best a one-sided solution: demand reduction must also be vigorously pursued as part of a balanced, multifaceted drug-control strategy.

18. At the regional level, Governments were working together to address all aspects of the drug problem; there were also bilateral cooperative arrangements between a number of ASEAN countries most affected by the drug problem, particularly those with common borders.

19. ASEAN itself had devised a number of mechanisms and projects to attack the drug problem from both the supply and the demand sides: through the annual meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters, it was strengthening regional cooperation on law enforcement, drug prevention, rehabilitation, research and training. Its three-year plan of action on drug-abuse control focused especially on demand reduction; under the plan, strategies included human-resource development, information dissemination, capacity-strengthening and facilitating ratification of all relevant United Nations conventions. To add political impetus to that work, in July 1988 the ASEAN Foreign

Ministers had issued a joint declaration for a drug-free ASEAN, reiterating their determination to eliminate drugs from the region by 2020. Also, there was a complementary subregional process in place which involved cooperation under the memorandum of understanding signed by UNDCP, Cambodia, China and some ASEAN member States, namely Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

20. The efforts of the ASEAN countries and others in South-East Asia would amount to little if the international community as a whole did not make drug control a global priority, and ASEAN therefore welcomed the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, held in June 1998, particularly its recognition that supply reduction must be matched by equally vigorous efforts to reduce demand. In that task, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction in General Assembly resolution S-20/3 would be an important tool to reduce the demand for drugs by 2008 as set out by the Political Declaration adopted at the special session.

21. ASEAN's experiences in the war against drugs had shown that the drug problem ate away at the core of communities and societies, prompting the recognition that the fight could not be won without the participation of the private sector, the community and civil society, which stood to lose most from drugs and to gain most from being drug-free. ASEAN therefore intended to enhance its cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the private sector – its fellow soldiers in the anti-drug crusade.

22. While progress had been made, a considerable number of challenges remained which deserved priority attention. Funding for drug-control and rehabilitation programmes must continue in spite of the current economic crisis. Nevertheless, the Governments of South-East Asia remained firm in their resolve. On the demand-reduction side, public-awareness campaigns needed to be intensified, with more active involvement of the public and private sectors. The participation of other members of the international community in the area of resource mobilization would also be welcome.

23. In order to tackle the global problem effectively from both the demand and supply sides, closer international coordination, particularly in such areas as sharing of information and technology, law enforcement and suppression of drug-trafficking, was called for. Such efforts must, however, be based on international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter, including the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

24. Crop-substitution programmes could be enhanced by adequate market access for substitute crops and a greater impetus to alternative development. Greater international cooperation to combat the use of synthetic drugs was crucial.

25. ASEAN valued its low-standing cooperation with UNDCP and remained firmly supportive of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the twentieth special session. ASEAN would continue to live up to its obligations to fight against illicit drugs for the sake of the future of the region and the future of mankind.

26. **Mr. Nuanthasing** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the adoption at the twentieth special session of the Political Declaration, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and action plans to enhance international drug control was a landmark of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse, 1991–2000. For the first time, specific target dates had been set for putting an end to the international drug problem.

27. The Lao Government had adopted a series of drug-control measures, including the establishment of a national commission, a special police force, and the launching of a national master plan for drug control. Domestic legislation had been amended to provide harsher penalties for drug-trafficking and to prohibit opium production.

28. At the international level, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was already party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and its 1972 Protocol and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and was soon to accede to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

29. Crop-substitution projects, conducted through collaboration with the United States Government, UNDP and UNDCP, among others, had led to a significant reduction in opium poppy cultivation since the early 1990s. Law-enforcement officers had worked unstintingly to arrest increasing numbers of offenders, confiscate large stocks of illicit drugs and dismantle drug refineries.

30. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the twentieth special session and was earnestly trying to translate the principles of international drug control into domestic action. Laos had therefore focused on institution-building, supply and demand reduction, and the prohibition of illicit trafficking and related crimes. The Government would rely heavily on financial and technical support from the international community to implement national drug-control projects over the next 10 years.

31. **Mr. Shihab** (Republic of Maldives) said that the target set during the twentieth special session of the General Assembly would be attainable through the continued support and cooperation of the international community.

32. With the drug menace on the rise, the least-developed States were at particular risk. As the world moved rapidly towards economic globalization and trade liberalization, the spiritual and moral dimension had been increasingly neglected; traditional, family and religious values had been ignored. It was therefore an appropriate time to reflect on current developments.

33. For developing countries, the disadvantages of globalization outweighed its advantages, primarily with respect to its negative social impact. The diversion of limited resources to fighting the drug menace presented a grave dilemma. Small island developing States with open borders required the full support of the international community in terms of resources, technical assistance and expertise to combat the drug menace and to achieve the goals set for the year 2008.

34. Maldives was fully committed to the international community's efforts to implement all measures against drug-trafficking and abuse. In the 1970s, it had embarked upon a plan to build institutional capacity and strengthen the legal framework for the application of domestic drug-control laws. In 1998, the Government had established a Narcotics Control Board and had developed a national action plan in line with international instruments calling for action at national, regional and international levels. At the regional level, Maldives fully participated in the programmes and measures undertaken within the framework of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), including accession to the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

35. Furthermore, a drug rehabilitation centre and hotline for the reform of drug offenders had recently been established. A comprehensive drug awareness programme had been launched, in association with local non-governmental organizations, to educate young people about the danger of drugs.

36. Precursor chemicals used to manufacture illicit drugs had been recognized as a serious challenge to international drug-control measures. Similarly, in Maldives, tobacco consumption was regarded as no less a problem. The Government had therefore launched parallel programmes to discourage tobacco consumption alongside drug-control programmes. Public advertising of tobacco products had been banned and smoking was prohibited in government offices and public spaces. In addition, two island communities had declared themselves tobacco-free islands.

37. Drugs represented a global problem which required a global response. Developing countries needed technical assistance and resources to join the international community in their efforts to curb the menace. His delegation was fully aware of the scope of the danger posed by drug abuse and was committed to effective action against that scourge.

38. **Mr. Zmeevski** (Russian Federation) said that the abuse of drugs, illicit drug-trafficking and transnational organized crime were a serious threat not only to social progress and sustainable development in most States but were becoming a factor of destabilization in international life and a challenge to global security. That being the case, even the most persistent efforts by individual States against crime and drug addiction could come to naught if they were not backed up by appropriate, coordinated and effective international action, and in such action the United Nations could and should have its say: the Russian Federation believed that the potential of the United Nations should be exploited to the full in formulating an agreed international anti-crime strategy.

39. The Russian Federation welcomed the progress made in implementing General Assembly resolution 52/90 on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/380). It welcomed also the practical orientation of the relevant United Nations organs and their desire to focus on the priority trends in anti-crime cooperation.

40. He welcomed the outcome of the seventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna in April 1998; the Russian Federation supported the draft resolutions the Commission had drawn up for the General Assembly, particularly those on transnational organized crime (A/C.3/53/L.3) and on preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/C.3/53/L.2).

41. The Russian Federation was prepared to continue work on drafts of a comprehensive convention against transnational organized crime and on additional draft protocols thereto, in the belief that strengthening the international legal basis was fully in line with the implementation of the 1994 Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime.

42. Naturally, universal cooperation in combating crime must be backed up by appropriate measures at the regional level; in that context, for the Russian Federation the priority was cooperation against crime within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as described by other speakers representing Commonwealth countries. The Russian Federation believed that the Commonwealth's positive experience in combating crime, like that of other regional structures, would be extremely useful for all States;

in that connection, he highlighted the important anti-crime decisions taken at the recent G–8 summit of major industrialized nations.

43. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly had adopted a number of crucial documents that demonstrated States' political will in the war against drugs and defined their strategy for the coming decade; the Russian Federation was particularly impressed by the practicality with which the final documents of the special session addressed the most acute drug problems and by the clarity with which the final and intermediate objectives had been set. Now, the main task must be to put those decisions into practice and do consistent, painstaking work, particularly in such areas as demand reduction, stopping the spread of synthetic drugs, controlling the traffic in precursors, encouraging alternative development, strengthening cooperation between law enforcement agencies and combating the laundering of drug money.

44. With their broad public, the mass media and non-governmental organizations must create a general climate of non-acceptance towards drugs. The most urgent problem was becoming one of how to hold the attention of young people, who were amongst the first to fall victim to the growing, treacherous drug craze; in that connection, the Russian Federation reiterated its support for the uncompromising position of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board that any legalization of drugs or their removal from strict State regulation was inadmissible.

45. The Russian Federation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations anti-drug structures – whose leading role in coordinating international cooperation against drugs had been confirmed by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session – and to improve their effectiveness. It welcomed also the large-scale strategic plans drawn up by the new management of UNDCP for eliminating drug cultivation worldwide.

46. The Russian Federation had always believed in expanding bilateral cooperation with UNDCP and in developing the Programme's cooperative links with the relevant government departments in Russia, and hoped that the outcome of the international conference in 1997 on cooperation with Russia on drug control would be put into practice.

47. Under a special federal programme, the Russian Government was taking active social, organizational, medical and legal steps to combat drug addiction. In April 1998, the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act had come into force. The drug law enforcement agencies had been significantly strengthened, drug treatment and rehabilitation centres were being set up and anti-drug campaigns in the mass media, educational establishments and the youth milieu had been stepped up sharply.

48. He expressed the hope that States' efforts on the national, regional and universal levels would succeed in turning the situation round and in translating into reality the slogan of the twentieth special session of a drug-free world.

49. **Ms. Aghadjanian** (Armenia) said that the twentieth special session on drug control had recognized the vital role of international cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking and related crimes, which posed a grave threat to individuals and States. Many countries in her own region were vulnerable to the lure of drugs, which were often seen as an easy solution to problems of economic uncertainty, social transition and new-found social freedoms.

50. Armenia was working to broaden and strengthen its legal framework pursuant to its accession to major international drug-control conventions and had incorporated eight new articles on drug addiction and illicit drug-trafficking into its draft criminal code. Drug-related crime in Armenia had increased one and a half times since 1993, while the volume of narcotics seized had risen thirtyfold. Armenia had become a transit route for illicit drug-trafficking, with some 70 per cent of the drugs seized originating elsewhere. However, it lacked the resources to fully combat the phenomenon. It hoped that international cooperation would lead to decisive action, particularly in the areas of money-laundering, judicial cooperation and control of chemical substances and stimulants.

51. Armenia was formulating a comprehensive national drug-control strategy, in which education played a vital role, targeting vulnerable groups and including civil society, the mass media, non-governmental organizations and regional and international institutions.

52. Drugs posed a particular threat to Armenia in a situation of economic decline, unemployment, low wage levels and poorly developed social insurance and labour market. The situation had been exacerbated by the 1988 earthquake and by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing from Azerbaijan's continuous shelling of Armenian border regions between 1988 and 1990. A further drain on the country's financial and material resources came from the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the Azeri blockade of main communication routes, and transportation difficulties.

53. However, Armenia remained committed to drug control and was working on new policies and approaches.

It had recently established a special unit within the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate national efforts in that area.

54. *Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) took the Chair.*

55. **Ms. Akbar** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that corruption, drug-trafficking and money-laundering were a totally new phenomenon in the region, the unexpected by-product of the opening of trade borders. Caribbean Governments welcomed support from international partners to combat money-laundering, small-arms and ammunition trafficking and corruption, which they were ill-equipped to tackle on their own.

56. The Community looked forward to the elaboration by the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee of an international convention against transnational organized crime, and of international instruments to combat traffic in human beings and illicit manufacture of and traffic in firearms. It strongly recommended that resources should be allocated to allow small island developing States to participate in that work. It lauded efforts to strengthen the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, particularly the project-formulation, coordination and implementation capacities of the Centre for International Crime Prevention. It hoped that Member States would financially support the Centre, which would focus *inter alia* on elaboration of the Convention. In that connection, CARICOM would carefully review elements recommended for inclusion in model legislation on mutual assistance in criminal matters.

57. Her delegation was proud of the fact that Trinidad and Tobago had been instrumental in reopening the international debate on the establishment of the International Criminal Court and hoped that that body's future deliberations would repay the faith that States had placed in it.

58. At the regional level, work was continuing on criminal justice and crime prevention, including proposals for the establishment of a Caribbean court of justice, a regional justice-protection programme, a harmonized approach to the death penalty, the development of legal education and the practice of law, a code of judicial conduct and harmonization of laws.

59. The Caribbean Community was particularly concerned by extraregional immigration policies, whereby Caribbean nationals found guilty of criminal activities were deported to the region, despite their tenuous connection to their country of birth. No account had been taken of the extremely detrimental impact that the presence of hardened criminals would have on small, vulnerable countries with limited resources.

60. Violence against vulnerable groups was a pervasive problem, which Caribbean Governments were tackling, using a holistic approach. Telephone hotlines had been established to respond to such problems in real time, while schools were teaching young people the importance of mutual respect. Law enforcement officials, health-care providers, educational staff and community leaders were receiving training to recognize the signs of abuse, while States were developing legislation to protect the victims of violence.

61. CARICOM member States sought to engender in youth a positive vision of citizenship. Organized events examined issues such as youth empowerment, participation in civil society, substance abuse, socialization, gender relations, goal-setting, conflict resolution, culture and enterprise.

62. CARICOM looked forward to the regional preparatory meeting for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and encouraged donors to assist developing countries, so that they could participate in the deliberations.

63. CARICOM recognized the importance of continued cooperation between the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and the International Drug Control Programme. It further welcomed the establishment of the Advisory Steering Group on Data Collection and Computerization (A/53/380, para. 24), which would help the Community improve data-collection capacities and would facilitate policy and planning activities in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice.

64. In addition to national action, the international community as a whole should recognize the need for collective responsibility in matters of crime prevention and criminal justice.

65. **Ms. Rajaonarivelo** (Madagascar) said that the international community could no longer afford to respond with platitudes to the problems of international terrorism, illicit drug-trafficking, organized crime, corruption and drug addiction. The community had to give effect to the decisions and other measures taken at different conferences, in order to counter phenomena that threatened to destabilize society and jeopardize the well-being of future generations.

66. Her delegation was convinced of the need for comprehensive and balanced national, regional and international strategies to reduce drug demand, supply, production and trafficking. International cooperation had to be improved, in order to find solutions that included

eradication of poverty and promotion of development. Moreover, development was predicated on the strengthening of political stability, the authority of the State, guarantees in the area of justice and a return to the rule of law.

67. For its part, Madagascar was engaged in talks on its accession to European conventions on judicial cooperation and on action to combat money-laundering. It had recently requested juridical assistance from UNDCP for the elaboration of legislation on money-laundering and had sought the support of the Universal Postal Union for training of postal, customs and law enforcement officials on the possible use of the postal service for drug-trafficking.

68. Madagascar had adopted new legislation on psychotropic substances and precursors, in line with the provisions of international conventions, and was preparing a national plan to reduce drug demand and eliminate illicit crop production.

69. Her delegation supported the establishment of an intergovernmental ad hoc committee to elaborate an international convention against transnational organized crime and further welcomed the commitments made by African States to prevent the expansion of transnational organized crime and corruption.

70. However, financial support was vital if international and regional cooperation were to succeed. Existing regional mechanisms needed to be reviewed to facilitate greater cooperation and exchange of experience and information between judicial authorities. The international community should transfer the required technology, while the mass media should undertake relevant information and awareness-raising activities.

71. Madagascar would play its part in those efforts and hoped that governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society and the international community as a whole would redouble their efforts to combat the scourge of insecurity so that nations could develop in a world that guaranteed respect for fundamental human rights.

72. **Mrs. Romulus** (Haiti) said that the problems caused by drugs harmed the health and welfare of individuals and undermined the economic, political and cultural foundations of society. Crime had increased in Haiti because of the repatriation of young Haitian nationals who had been convicted of illicit drug-trafficking and drug abuse in North America. Her Government was stepping up its efforts to deal with that problem by monitoring their return and reintegrating them into Haitian society. States must consider the social factors underlying crimes linked to drug-trafficking, particularly among young people, and identify social-reintegration measures to be taken at the local, national and regional level. Joint efforts were necessary to create a better environment for young people, especially those in vulnerable groups.

73. She wished to raise a further issue. A proportion of pharmaceutical drugs sold throughout the world were fake and represented an enormous market controlled by organized crime. In spite of the efforts made by the pharmaceutical industry to deal with that problem, the police and international agencies had not found any solution.

74. Haiti, like other vulnerable island nations in the Caribbean, was making a determined effort to cope with increased drug-trafficking. Two specialized police units, the Coast Guard, an anti-drug brigade and a customs surveillance unit were involved in the campaign to combat drug-trafficking. Haitian officials and law enforcement agents had benefited from training conducted in cooperation with UNDCP. Her country had also adopted the Barbados action plan in 1996 and had participated in follow-up meetings in that regard in cooperation with other countries of the subregion, the United States of America and the European Union. In addition, the Haitian Government had carried out joint measures with the Dominican Republic to improve border surveillance and had signed a maritime cooperation agreement with the United States to combat illicit drug-trafficking.

75. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) stressed the need for joint efforts at the regional and international levels to deal with the threat caused by illicit drug-trafficking and organized crime. In that regard, his country had welcomed the holding of the recent special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, whose recommendations and declarations constituted guidelines for future action.

76. Cameroon, which had acceded to all the international drug-control conventions, was adapting its national legislation to deal with the problems caused by illicit drug-trafficking, arms-trafficking, money-laundering and related crime. His country was working actively to strengthen economic cooperation and stability in Central Africa, which required more than ever the support of the international community in its fight against drug-trafficking and organized crime. It was therefore urgent to set up a United Nations office in Central Africa to coordinate and intensify measures to deal with those problems.

77. **Mr. Al-Malki** (Bahrain) said that drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking posed an extremely grave threat to various aspects of life in society, destroying the souls of individuals, particularly youth. The international community should

spare no effort to eradicate the problem through mutual cooperation. The work of the United Nations in that domain was highly encouraging.

78. For its part, Bahrain was firmly committed to combating drug abuse and trafficking and their pernicious effects on economic and social life. All of its ministries and institutions were involved in efforts to eradicate that scourge and a special unit had been established in the psychiatric hospital to deal with substance abuse. The Ministry of Health had issued a decree prohibiting any other approach to the treatment of drug addiction, while a committee had been established within the Ministry to combat the scourge of illicit drugs.

79. A series of educational lectures had helped to raise the awareness of schoolchildren about the dangers of drugs, on the principle that prevention was better than cure. Conferences had also been held in sports and cultural clubs, focusing on the role of civil society in prevention. Relevant television and radio programmes had been broadcast to reach as large an audience as possible.

80. The Government had amended the law to provide for the death penalty or life imprisonment for trafficking offences and for the imposition of tougher fines on drug dealers. At the same time, national agencies were carrying out border monitoring and control to prevent illegal entry of narcotic substances.

81. Bahrain continued to cooperate in that area with States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States and had acceded to the relevant international conventions. It was committed to the elimination of the drug scourge and looked forward to the strengthening of international cooperation with a view to securing a better and more stable future for society as a whole.

82. **Ms. Tay** (Togo) expressed satisfaction with the recent special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which had enabled States to reach consensus on new drug-control strategies. Her Government fully supported the session's action plans and declarations, which must be implemented at the national, regional and international levels. Each State must increase its participation in the anti-drug campaign through energetic measures taking into account the new dimensions of the problem and by strengthening existing legislation.

83. Togo was fully committed to combating the drug problem and had taken numerous legislative and regulatory measures at the national, regional and international levels. Her country was a party to the three international drug-control conventions as well as major subregional instruments in that field. In March 1998 her Government had adopted, in accordance with the 1988 Convention, a new law relating to the prevention and suppression of drug-trafficking, the treatment and reintegration of drug addicts, and money-laundering. An anti-drug committee established to coordinate activities within the country was drawing up a national policy based on a global, multisectoral approach. Togo also had a drug-analysis laboratory, which had been equipped with the assistance of UNDCP. In the field of law enforcement, the police and customs services carried out drug seizure and destruction operations through their anti-drug brigades.

84. The effective implementation of that policy through an increased drug-analysis capability, the establishment of new anti-drug units, the setting up of facilities to assist drug addicts, and the organization of training programmes could not be carried out without bilateral and multilateral assistance. Accordingly, her delegation welcomed the steps taken by UNDCP to assist the countries of Africa in that field and hoped that those activities would strengthen cooperation between States aimed at combating illegal drug-trafficking.

85. **Ms. Aghadjanian** (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Azerbaijan, in his statement at the previous meeting, had made a misleading reference to Armenian armed aggression against that country. The conflict in question was between the people of Nagorny Karabakh and the Government of Azerbaijan, which refused to address the demands of that people to exercise their right to self-determination. The local Armenian population in Nagorny Karabakh had acted in self-defence in order to avoid mass deportation and genocide. Armenia and its armed forces, therefore, bore no responsibility for the territories currently controlled by the armed forces of Nagorny Karabakh. In future, the representative of Azerbaijan should use more precise terminology in his statements. It was not the first time that representatives of that country had cited so-called Armenian aggression in an attempt to explain their own economic and social problems.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.